

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Nebraska Career & Technical Education

Developing a Local Advisory Committee

Resource Handbook

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What is an Advisory Committee?

One of the most common characteristics associated with *quality programs* in career and technical education is the link with the business community. Local advisory committees are, in many cases, the most effective way to develop and strengthen such partnerships.

Local advisory committees are designed to increase the participation of the public in local career and technical education programs and provide greater cooperation between career and technical education and the private sector in:

- Making career and technical education more responsive to, and reflective of, both the labor market and business/industry
- Promoting quality career and technical education
- Preparing individuals for employment and entrepreneurship

Why Are Advisory Committees So Important?

Career and technical education programs should be tailored to meet the workforce development needs of the community and the needs and interests of the individual students.

Advisory committees strengthen collaboration between those responsible for career and technical education programs and the communities they serve. The dialogue between advisory committee members and career and technical educators fosters shared responsibility for preparing students for a place in the workforce and in society.

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What are the Different Types of Advisory Committees?

Here are Some Common Types in Nebraska:

General CTE Advisory Committee

The general CTE advisory committee is appointed for the specific purpose of advising faculty and administration on the maintenance, extension and improvement of the total career and technical education program. Through input, the committee members help to maintain quality and relevance of career and technical education and help strengthen support from the community.

Program of Study/Career Cluster/Discipline Advisory Committee

This advisory committee works at the individual program of study, career cluster or discipline level and is concerned with matters such as curriculum content, equipment, facilities and placement of graduates. Members should represent the occupational area that is served by the program. This advisory committee should have representation or a reporting mechanism to the general advisory committee.

Perkins Advisory Committee

The Perkins advisory committee is organized for the specific purpose of the administration of the Federal Perkins grant for career and technical education. This usually includes determining and prioritizing career and technical education needs within the allocation of the Perkins grant. Federal Law defines the basic makeup of the committee, but additional members may serve.

In a school/college that directly receives Perkins funds, the Perkins advisory committee is usually the same as the general advisory committee.

If the Perkins grant is awarded to a consortium of schools, the Perkins advisory committee must include the members defined by the Federal Law, but should also include adequate representation from each school involved in the consortium. Many Perkins advisory committees operate with subcommittees from each program area to provide adequate information for decision-making based on program needs.

Establishing the Advisory Committee

Educators and school officials must understand how to work effectively with advisory committees. It is especially important to consult the appropriate administrators and school personnel involved in the establishment of an advisory committee. Before an advisory committee is established, approval should be obtained from the appropriate authority. Written statements of rationale and purposes of the advisory committee should be prepared.

Roles of the Committee

Advisory committees have three major roles:

- To advise — The advisory committee assesses specific areas of the career and technical education program and makes suggestions and recommendations designed to improve that specific area. Such recommendations could include the modification of curriculum, purchase of new instructional materials and equipment or adoption of a new safety policy.
- To assist — The advisory committee helps the instructor(s) and/or administrator carry out specific activities. These activities could include judging competitive skill events, setting up a scholarship program or obtaining media coverage for special events.
- To support and advocate — The advisory committee promotes the career and technical education program throughout the community. Promotion or marketing could include talking to legislators, speaking for career and technical education at board meetings, writing articles for local newspapers or arranging publicity.

Members may be selected from the following:

- Geographical sections of the school's service area
- All types of business and industry, particularly those predominant in the area
- Both labor and management
- Job service personnel
- Government
- Students/former students
- Parents of students

Individuals who serve on the advisory committee should represent a community cross-section in terms of gender, race, occupation and socio-economic status. Three other important factors to be considered when nominating members for the committee are their capability, available time and level of interest. An effort should be made to select advisory committee members who have some direct relationship to career and technical education.

Establishing the Advisory Committee

Size of the Committee

Effective advisory committees are large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to be managed effectively. Committees with fewer than five members may have limited perspective, inadequate information on the career fields and too little diversity. Committees with more than 15-20 members can become unmanageable.

Appointment of Committee Members

Be sure to nominate persons whose opinions are respected. The value of any recommendation of the committee will be essentially equal to the collective respect that the community, school and administration have for the members of the committee. (See Illustration 1.1)

Consider having the members of the committee formally appointed by the appropriate administrator or school personnel. Appointments to advisory committees should be made for definite periods of time. Procedures should be established to address members' appointment dismissals or resignations and the possible use of alternates. (See Illustration 1.2)

Term of Service

To allow for both continuity and change, it may prove beneficial to incorporate a rotational three-year term of service. To establish this rotation with a new committee, the members draw lots for one-, two-, or three-year terms, with one-third of the committee in each category. New members are appointed as terms expire.

Orientation for Committee Members

New committee members must be provided an orientation to their role on the advisory committee, but also must have current information or career and technical education offered in the school. Some ways to provide CTE information to the committee members are:

- Interviews with CTE teachers
- Tours of CTE program facilities
- Review of curriculum materials including textbooks
- Talking with students and/or parents

Establishing the Advisory Committee

Committee Operations

Advisory committees are more likely to be effective if formal operational guidelines are established. These formal guidelines would include a Charter, established meeting schedule and agendas.

CHARTER

A career and technical education advisory committee charter may be established in writing to orient committee members to the goals, objectives, rules and procedures of the operation of the committee. The charter should be kept brief with emphasis on clarifying the management and interaction of the committee. The charter may include:

- The name of the programs being served
- The relationship of the committee to the program(s)/school being served
- The purpose and goal(s) of the committee
- Terms of members
- Election of officers
- Bylaws, reports, special procedural rules, etc.

MEETINGS

Once appointed, advisory committee members should attend meetings regularly, participate in discussions, and respect the rights of fellow members. Systematic controls should be established to deal with committee operations. Meetings should be held as often as the committee has important business (see Illustration 1.3). Officers should include a chair, a vice chair and a secretary. The business of the committee should be conducted with:

- A working agenda
- Use of parliamentary procedures with recording of minutes
- Subcommittees as necessary
- Decision by a quorum vote of a simple majority

Establishing the Advisory Committee

AGENDA

Items for the agenda should be identified by the education representative and the advisory committee chairperson (see Illustration 1.4). The agenda should be prepared for each meeting and distributed to the members before the meeting when notice of the meeting is sent.

Agenda items should include:

- Roll call and agenda additions (if any)
- Introductions of guests
- Approval of previous minutes
- Special presentations
- Communication
- Committee reports
- Old business
- New business
- Adjournment

Responsibilities of Committee Members

An effective committee is one that knows in advance that something positive will occur as a result of its work. To have something occur, the committee must be goal directed. One of the best ways to encourage attendance and participation is to give the committee real situations to discuss.

Responsibilities of Committee Officers

CHAIR

The chair's leadership is key to the success of the advisory committee. It is suggested that a member other than a school representative assume this role. The chair should possess skills and characteristics such as:

- Experience in business/industry in the community served by the program
- Ability to manage meetings, plan and adhere to schedules, involve members in ongoing activities and reach closure or consensus on issues
- Skill in oral and written communications as well as willingness to make appearances before school and community representatives
- Experience as a committee member
- Ability to delegate responsibility as well as willingness to accept responsibility for the committee's actions
- Personal characteristics such as empathy, fairness, tolerance and sound judgment

Activities of an Advisory Committee

The responsibilities of the chair include:

- Work with school and community representatives to plan and carry out the committee's program of work
- Prepare agendas and assist the instructor in handling details regarding meetings
- Preside at meetings
- Keep group efforts focused and all members involved in tasks
- Delegate tasks and follow-up work
- Arrange for presenting of background information and reports to the committee
- Represent the committee at official meetings and functions
- Submit recommendations of the committee to appropriate administrators and group
- Follow-up on committee recommendations or actions

VICE CHAIR

The skills and responsibilities of the vice chair are identical to those of the chair. The vice chair takes charge when the chair is absent or cannot serve.

SECRETARY

The secretary records meeting minutes (see Illustration 1.5) and performs other clerical duties. Committees may use a school representative in this position because of their access to computers and reproduction facilities.

The responsibilities of the secretary include:

- Take minutes at meetings; prepare and distribute minutes
- Mail agenda, announcements, minutes and other information to members
- Help assemble and distribute necessary background information to members
- Correspond with representatives of school and community as needed

Activities of an Advisory Committee

BYLAWS

Effective advisory committees are guided by policies and rules that describe the purposes of the committee, its scope of responsibility and what is expected of committee members. (see Illustration 1.6)

Bylaws are a formal written description of committee operation. At a minimum, they include:

- Name of the committee
- Purpose
- Membership
- Officers and their duties
- Meetings
- Committees
- Parliamentary authority
- Amendment procedure

Bylaws should be tailored to the needs and requirements of the program and the school in which the program operates.

SAMPLE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Once the committee has identified its priorities, the discussion will become more specific as the committee determines exactly what it wants to accomplish. Possible activities in each priority area include:

Community relations activities

- Present programs to civic and service groups
- Establish ways to recognize outstanding students, teachers and community leaders
- Obtain contributions to promote programs
- Participate in and promote special school events
- Provide information at school board meetings
- Set up and support a scholarship program
- Promote secondary/postsecondary connections

Activities of an Advisory Committee

Curriculum activities

- Review instructional materials for technical accuracy
- Assist in obtaining instructional materials
- Recommend equipment and supplies
- Recommend core curriculum content
- Recommend safety policies
- Provide equipment and facilities for specialized training needs
- Encourage/promote secondary/postsecondary connections

Community resource activities

- Identify community resource people
- Provide tours and field trip experiences
- Provide speakers
- Promote awareness of career opportunities

Career and Technical Student Organization activities

- Assist in developing competitive skills events
- Judge competitive skills events
- Sponsor student organization activities
- Collect skill events contributions of equipment and supplies

Job placement activities

- Organize employer/student conferences
- Notify teachers of job openings for students
- Provide training sites for students
- Encourage other employers to provide training sites
- Assist students to develop interviewing skills
- Recommend employability skills
- Hire career and technical education graduates

Activities of an Advisory Committee

Program review activities

- Review program goals and objectives
- Participate on program evaluation teams
- Compare student performance standards to business/industry standards
- Review adequacy of the facility
- Make recommendations for program improvement
- Review secondary/postsecondary possibilities
- Support dual credit opportunities for students (secondary/postsecondary)

Staff development activities

- Provide in-service activities on new and current business/industry methods and processes for instructors
- Provide skilled technicians to supplement instructor's experience
- Provide summer/part-time employment to instructors for technical upgrading
- Support instructor participation in professional development activities

Recruitment activities

- Assist in recruiting new staff
- Assist in recruiting potential students

This list of activities is not all inclusive, but should give the advisory committee some ideas to consider. The functions and activities chosen for the program of work should match the needs of the program and community.

Activities of an Advisory Committee

The advisory committee may benefit administrators by:

- Advising the school authorities on the development of its long-range and annual plans for career and technical education
- Advising on policy matters rising out of the administration of the plan
- Interpreting to the school authorities the career and technical education needs of individuals and the community
- Assisting the school authorities in identifying the career and technical education needs of individuals and the community
- Assisting in assessing present and foreseeable needs in the area labor market
- Evaluating the impact of career and technical education programs on the people and community
- Assisting school personnel in understanding the postsecondary training needs for meeting the labor market's needs

The advisory committee may benefit the school and students by:

- Assisting in conducting surveys of local workforce needs
- Reviewing long-range and annual plans for a career and technical education program
- Advising on the establishment and maintenance of quality and relevant career and technical programs
- Reviewing career and technical education budget requests for CTE instructional materials, labs, equipment and supplies
- Evaluating the adequacy of CTE facilities and equipment
- Reviewing course content to ensure relevancy
- Assisting in identifying skills/competencies needed in specific occupations
- Assisting in development of workbased learning opportunities
- Assisting in development of postsecondary training opportunities
- Promote career guidance activities in school counseling
- Serve as mentors for students seeking career guidance

Activities of an Advisory Committee

- Reviewing child labor laws and local student employment
- Arranging plant/field trip visits for teachers, students and counselors
- Assisting in developing/maintaining library of visual aids, magazines and books concerning industry
- Assisting in developing in securing samples of industry products/materials for exhibit and instructional purposes
- Providing scholarships and other financial assistance for outstanding graduates desiring to continue their education and training
- Providing recognition such as awards to outstanding students
- Supporting and becoming involved with career and technical education student organizations (CTSO's)
- Assisting in conducting clinics and in-service training for teachers
- Providing resource persons from industry to assist teachers
- Arranging industry experiences for teachers
- Providing recognition such as awards to outstanding teachers
- Paying industry organization membership dues for teachers
- Helping teachers, financially, to attend out-of-town industry and teachers organization meetings

Activities of an Advisory Committee

The advisory committee may benefit the community by:

- Providing speakers to address trade or civic groups or appear on radio and television concerning career and technical education programs in the schools
- Providing news stories on career and technical education programs to local news media and to industry trends magazines
- Attending meetings in support of career and technical education programs that may be called by local or state schools officials, boards and legislative groups
- Contributing funds to promote specific programs by way of advertisement in newspapers or through other media

Evaluating Committee Effectiveness

A periodic review of the local advisory committee can help the committee in determining:

- The extent to which it is accomplishing its goals
- The extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened the career and technical education program
- Future direction and activities for the committee

This review can be either formal or informal. The goal of the review is to help the committee determine its overall effectiveness. The teacher and others can be a valuable resource in this review process.

Advisory Committee Member's Guidelines

Do

Make a commitment
Attend meetings
Stick to the agenda — meet for a purpose
Align recommendations with available resources
Remember advisory role
Advise when improvement is desired
Be a fact finder
Make commendations for a job well done
Invite all opinions
Develop good rapport
Consider a variety of subjects

Don't

“Wait and See”
Have a record of absenteeism
Waste others time
Add to the “wish list”
Usurp school administrator's or board's authority
Fail to suggest alternative solutions
Be a fault finder
Be afraid to give recognition
Avoid those who disagree
Remain in isolation
Impose pre-established, personal opinions

Assessing Advisory Committees

Reviewing the Program of Work

Like the career and technical education program itself, the work of the advisory committee should be reviewed periodically. The primary reasons for this review are to determine:

- The extent to which the committee is accomplishing the program of work
- The extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened and improved the career and technical education program
- The future direction, functions and activities for the committee

It is suggested that assessment be part of the agenda for the advisory committee's final meeting of the school year. Assessment of the program of work might include answering the following questions:

Were annual priorities established?

To make an impact on the career and technical education program, build the advisory committee program of work around the function(s) that have the highest priority for that year.

Did the activities or projects help to carry out the established priorities?

As advisory committees begin developing their plans, it is easy to forget that individual projects that help carry out the overall priority for the year are likely to have a greater impact than an equal or larger number of projects that do not relate to a common goal.

Was the program of work realistic in scope?

An enthusiastic committee may develop an ambitious program of work and then find that they cannot complete or even begin all the tasks they have set for themselves.

Were specific timelines established for each planning task?

Timelines help to keep committee members on task. In complex projects or those that require several months to complete, setting intermediate timelines can help members see progress even when the ultimate goal has not been reached.

What impacts has the committee seen as a result of the program at work?

It is important to recognize successes of any size. Celebrate your successes—they help to maintain enthusiasm among advisory committee members.

Assessing Advisory Committees

Factors Affecting Advisory Committee Success

The success of an advisory committee can also be affected by the way in which the committee is managed. While each advisory committee may operate differently, certain factors can help to predict whether the committee will be able to function effectively. These factors include:

Number of meetings each year

The number of meetings required will be determined by the advisory committee's annual goals and program of work. There should be enough meetings to move beyond the "information" stage and into action that addresses specific issues of program improvement.

Attendance at meetings

Adults frequently "vote with their feet." If they feel an activity is not a good use of their time, they attend less often or even end their involvement.

Length of service on the advisory committee

Service on the advisory committee should be long enough that members become well acquainted with the program and are able to make knowledgeable suggestions or recommendations. Furthermore, staggering membership terms assures that there will always be some experienced advisory committee members who can help educate the new members.

Representation from diverse populations

A committee has greater credibility when it is perceived to represent the entire community, program and student population it serves. Where occupations in a business or industry had been traditional to one gender, extra care should be taken to change the perception by securing advisory committee representation from among non-traditional employees in that field.

Meeting agenda

Having the agenda prior to the date of the meeting gives members an opportunity to consider the issues that will be discussed. A written agenda may also keep members on task.

Distribution of minutes

Minutes of meetings remind members of what was done and what remains to be done. The minutes also inform decision-makers within your school about what is being discussed and/or proposed for the career and technical education program.

Assessing Advisory Committees

Public Recognition of Committee Members

When individuals volunteer their time, appropriate recognition can let advisory committee members know that their investment of knowledge and time is worthwhile and appreciated.

Recommendations are given careful consideration

Knowing they make a difference can inspire advisory committee members. Therefore, inform the advisory committee when recommendations are implemented.

Recognize outstanding members

Rewards encourage attendance and involvement. Recognition activities also attract the attention and interest of other qualified people who may someday serve on the advisory committee. They also bring public attention and goodwill to the organization because they demonstrate that the organization appreciates the efforts of its members.

Members are not paid for their efforts; therefore, rewards and recognition are especially important to advisory committees. Rewards should not be given indiscriminately but should be based on actual contribution to the committee's activity.

The best types of rewards or recognition are those that can stimulate productivity, improve committee interaction and increase member satisfaction. Most members are willing to attend regularly and work hard as long as their expertise and talents are used, their recommendations are seriously considered and they are given feedback concerning their efforts.

The following are some ways to recognize your committee members:

- ◇ Issue press releases announcing member appointments
- ◇ Report periodically at meetings and in the media on the results of committee recommendations and the ways the committee has been of service
- ◇ Invite members to visit programs to see the results of their recommendations
- ◇ Invite members to attend special career and technical education events
- ◇ Introduce advisory committee members at program or CTSO meetings or events

Assessing Advisory Committees

Recognize outstanding members—continued

- ◇ Hold a banquet in honor of the committee and present certificates of service
- ◇ Schedule a meeting whereby administrators of the school or institution can attend
- ◇ Place members' names on a display board or plaque at the school or institution
- ◇ Include members' names on program information disseminated to the public
- ◇ At the end of the year, send each member a letter of thanks and appreciation, signed by the appropriate school official
- ◇ Send a letter of appreciation to the committee member's supervisor and/or company, explaining the work being done by the member and committee and thanking the company for its support
- ◇ Provide a certificate that the member can display at work, identifying him or her as a current advisory committee member



Appendix

Sample Member Invitation Letter

Illustration 1.1

Date

Ms. Jane Jones
213 Cedar Avenue
Somewhere, NE 68000

Dear Ms. Jones

Your experience and exemplary reputation have led to your recommendation for membership on the CTE Advisory Committee for (name of program) at (name of school). The committee is composed of outstanding business, industry and civic representatives from our community. It works to forge closer cooperation between business and education by continually improving the workforce preparation for our students.

Your insight into the skills needed for today's competitive workplace would be of great value. Our committee and our school's desire is to prepare young people to gain those necessary skills.

We realize your time is limited; we will make every effort to keep our meetings prompt, precise and purposeful. There will be (number) meetings a year for each of the three years of your term.

We invite you to become a member of the CTE Advisory Committee; your three-year term would begin on (date). Please consider this invitation and inform us of your decision by (date). We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely

Committee Chair,
Teacher, and/or
Administrative Official

Sample Member Appointment Letter

Illustration 1.2

Date

Ms. Jane Jones
213 Cedar Avenue
Somewhere, NE 68000

Dear Ms. Jones

Congratulations on your three-year appointment to the CTE Advisory Committee for (name of program) at (name of school). Thank you for your willingness to serve. Your contribution will keep the program effective and up to date as well as help to make our community a better place in which to live and work.

Your first meeting as a committee member is scheduled for (date) at (time) in the (room, name and address of school). You will be contacted soon with a tentative agenda and other committee member materials.

We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please call.

Sincerely

Administrative Official

Sample Notice of Meeting

Illustration 1.3

Date

Name

Company

Address

Somewhere, State ZIP

Dear (Name)

The next meeting of the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee will be (time/date) at (location). Enclosed is a copy of the agenda for the meeting. We plan to tour the facility and discuss curriculum concerns.

We look forward to seeing you. Please notify me if you cannot attend. Phone: (555-0000)

Email: (——).

Sincerely

Committee Chair

Sample Agenda for Meeting to Organize Committee

Illustration 1.4

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(LOCATION)
(DATE — 7-9 p.m.)

Call to Order

(-Committee Chair)

Welcome and Introduction of Members and Guests

(-Committee Chair and Program Instructor)

Approval of Minutes

Role of the CTE Advisory Committee

Overview of the CTE Program and Tour of Facility

(-Instructor)

Unfinished Business

- ◇ Report of Response to Previous Committee's Recommendations
- ◇ Update on Program of Work for Year

New Business

- ◇ Discussion of a Program of Work
- ◇ Establish Time, Date and Location of Next Meeting
- ◇ Assess Equipment and Facilities

Scheduling of Next Meeting

(-Committee Chair)

Adjourn

Sample Advisory Committee Minutes

Illustration 1.5

**[HIGH SCHOOL]
[CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION]
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
[DATE OF MEETING]

MINUTES**

Members Present. (List)

Members Absent. (List)

Other Present. (List)

Call to Order. Committee Chair Beverly Smith called the meeting to order at 12 noon and expressed appreciation for attendance and participation. She stressed the importance of the committee's continuing support and assistance. Dr. Jane Doe, Principal, greeted the committee. Her greeting further assured the committee of its importance to the educational goals and program vitality.

Minutes. Minutes of the last meeting were approved as submitted.

Unfinished Business. No unfinished business was brought before the committee.

New Business. Ms. Smith asked the committee to make suggestions concerning "What are the new requirements of entry-level employees?"

Ben Read indicated that a computer or data processing background would be helpful for employees. Eva Johnson further emphasized the need for computer training. She indicated that a job applicant with computer knowledge has an advantage. It was the consensus of the committee that expanded computer training should be added to the CTE program as soon as possible. The chair was asked to appoint a subcommittee to investigate several kinds of computers and software for possible purchase to work with a committee of CTE instructors and a report should be given at the next advisory committee meeting.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Paul Papper, Secretary

Sample Local Advisory Committee Bylaws

Illustration 1.6

ADVISORY COMMITTEE BYLAWS

Article I: Name

The name of the committee shall be the [School/Institution] Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this committee shall be to advise, assist and support and advocate for the Career and Technical Education program on matters that will strengthen instruction and expand learning opportunities for students.

Article III: Members

- Section 1. Members shall be selected and appointed by the program coordinator, advisory committee or administration.
- Section 2. Members shall represent a cross-section of the industry or occupation for which training is provided and the community served by the program.
- Section 3. Member terms shall be three years, with one-third of the membership appointed each year. No member shall serve consecutive terms, but a former member may be re-appointed after a one-year absence from the committee.

Article IV: Officers

- Section 1. Officers shall be a chair, vice-chair and secretary. These officers shall be the Executive Council for the advisory committee.
- Section 2. Duties of officers shall be those commonly ascribed to these offices.
- Section 3. Officers shall be elected by simple majority of appointed members.

Article V: Meetings

- Section 1. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of appointed members.
- Section 2. Decisions will commonly be made by consensus. A formal vote shall be taken when a decision is to be forwarded to the instructor or administration as a recommendation.

Article VI: Subcommittee

- Section 1. Subcommittees shall be appointed by the chair as needed to accomplish the program of work.

Article VII: Parliamentary Authority

Except as otherwise provided in its Bylaws, the advisory committee shall be governed in its proceedings by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Article VIII: Amendment of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at a meeting of the committee by a two-thirds vote.

Bylaws adopted [date]

Bylaws amended [most recent amendment date]

